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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 38th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 31 October 1991, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. PENNANEACH (Vice-President)	(Togo)

- Programmes and activities to promote peace in the world [22]

  (a) Report of the Secretary-General

  (b) Draft resolutions

- Statement by the President

- Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields: report of the Secretary-General [137] (continued)

- Programme of work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 22

PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE PEACE IN THE WORLD

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/46/549)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/46/L.15, A/46/L.18)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I call on the representative of Costa Rica, who will introduce draft resolution A/46/L.15.

Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): I am particularly pleased to introduce agenda item 22, "Programmes and activities to promote peace in the world". The title of this item, which originated with the General Assembly's declaration of 1986 as International Year of Peace, clearly shows the action the peoples of the United Nations expect from the world Organization and their desire for the attainment of one of its paramount objectives, on which depends the survival of mankind: world peace.

The Secretary-General's report, prepared pursuant to resolution A/44/11, adopted by the General Assembly on 24 October 1989, shows the many and varied activities being carried on by States Members of the United Nations, specialized agencies and other organs of the United Nations systems and interested non-governmental organizations, which have provided valuable cooperation and undertaken important initiatives to support the United Nations as it discharges its mandate. The common desire of the peoples of the whole world has acquired an impetus which shows that we are increasingly resolved to promote peace. This can be seen nationally at all levels, and also in the regional and international spheres.

(Mrs. Castro de Barish, Costa Rica)

The work of the Peace Studies Unit of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs has been very successful. Although many programmes have been developed, I shall emphasize one, which, because of its simplicity and symbolism, appeals to the greatest number of people of all ages and social circumstances: the "Light a Candle for Peace" initiative for the International Day of Peace. We would encourage the Unit to continue its activities to establish this as a tradition on the International Day of Peace. All the activities described in the Secretary-General's report are making us increasingly aware of the need to increase all activities to promote peace in the world.

Paragraph 26 of the report lists a number of activities being carried on in Costa Rica. They involve the country's two main universities - one in San Pedro de Montes de Oca, the University of Costa Rica, and the other in Heredia, the National University. In addition, the University of Peace holds seminars and round tables on disarmament and peace and has graduate programmes in international relations, cooperation, integration and peace, as well as programmes on ecology and protection of natural resources and the environment. On 1 October we began a graduate programme on natural resources and sustainable development, entitled "Ecology and peace". We have held seminars on religion and peace, on labour relations and even on the role of journalists with regard to peace, as well as a meeting on the Latin American woman in the twenty-first century.

In a message of 12 September for the International Day of Peace the Secretary-General said:

(Mrs. Castro de Barish, Costa Rica)

"Recent years have brought significant progress towards peace. The role of the United Nations in the promotion of peace has broadened and intensified. Now we are much closer to being the United Nations the Charter envisages." (SG/SM/4615)

We have seen how old structures and patterns have given way to other options more in keeping with the times we live in. Nevertheless, despite the positive action that has been taken, more efforts must be made to ensure peaceful change and the establishment of new and fairer mechanisms to improve human and international relations. Various programmes and activities have been organized to promote peace in the world, focusing directly on the relationship between peace and the quality of life. They have highlighted growing awareness of the new concept of peace. The traditional idea that peace is the absence of war has been changed by recognition of the fact that action to guarantee the survival of planet Earth cannot be postponed indefinitely. Peace and security cannot be seen as exclusively military concepts. The achievement of peace depends on individual freedom and justice, human development, development of the peoples and solidarity among the nations of the world.

Here it is worth recalling an idea expressed by the Permanent Representative of Chile in the First Committee. He said:

"This leads me to think that, in the final analysis, the real peace dividend is not just a matter related to the use of resources released from military budgets, important though that may be. The real peace dividend is a political, intellectual and cultural one. The main benefit should be our own capacity to think with open minds, and on the basis of up-to-date criteria, about the problems of peace and security. We must

(Mrs. Castro de Barish, Costa Rica)

begin by recognizing that the ideological division of the world eclipsed other security problems at least as important as the confrontation between the super-Powers. But, in addition, the cold war intellectually distorted our identification of the problems by defining them in terms of a friend-enemy dichotomy rather than in terms of permanent values." (A/C.1/46/PV.3, pp. 71-72)

There is a growing awareness in the international community that security and stability go beyond the military sphere. We have accepted the idea of interdependence between the military, economic and ecological spheres. Perhaps in the near future the international community will devote resources to human and economic development and to the environment, instead of to arms. That is our fervent desire.

My Government believes it is vital to combat violence at all levels and in all environments, bringing home to people the need for dialogue to prevail over violence and reason over bitterness, so that young people will soon be able to realize their desire for peace, social justice, freedom and understanding. To that end, we must make a sustained effort to promote with ever greater intensity those elements that will lead us to a twenty-first century that is more peaceful, more just and more human.

(Mrs. Castro de Barish, Costa Rica)

I should now like to introduce the draft resolution under agenda item 22 contained in document A/46/L.15 entitled, "Programmes and activities to promote peace in the world". I have the honour to do so on behalf of the sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Marshall Islands, Morocco, Nicaragua, Panama, Samoa, Saint Lucia, Senegal, the Sudan, Suriname, Togo, Ukraine, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zaire. Moreover, I am pleased to say that Cyprus, the Philippines, Poland and the Soviet Union have joined the sponsors.

The draft resolution recalls that 1986 was proclaimed International Year of Peace. This proclamation became the keystone for generating a series of activities and programmes that are described in the Secretary-General's report (A/46/549). These activities and programmes have been increasing and have stimulated greater interest on the part of the Organization's Members, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, scientific and educational institutions at all levels and individuals who wish to cooperate and assist the United Nations in its efforts to attain one of its paramount objectives, namely, peace in the world.

We should like to emphasize the fourth preambular paragraph, wherein the General Assembly bears in mind that peace is not merely the absence of war, but that interdependence and cooperation to foster human rights, social and economic development, disarmament, protection of the environment and ecosystems and the improvement of the quality of life for all are indispensable elements for the establishment of peaceful societies - peace dividends. It recalls that we are all witnessing with satisfaction the

(Mrs. Castro de Barish, Costa Rica)

unprecedented peaceful and positive transformations that have taken place in many countries of the world today.

In the operative part of the resolution, it takes note of the report of the Secretary-General and expresses its satisfaction at the many activities and programmes inspired by the guidelines prepared by the Secretary-General and by the designation of organizations and cities as "Peace Messengers" that have contributed positively to promoting peace. It welcomes the valuable and important role played by the Peace Studies Unit of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs in promoting peace, encouraging activities and exchanges of information on peace-related subjects among the non-governmental organizations, academic and scientific institutions and cities around the world, and stimulating action to strengthen the United Nations as an instrument for peace. It also welcomes the important and peaceful changes that have taken place in many countries of the world in order to bring about political and social changes towards more democratic systems of government. It invites all sectors of the international community to continue their efforts to assist the United Nations in promoting peace in the world. Lastly, it requests the Secretary-General to invite them to report to him on their activities and initiatives in pursuit of those ends, and to submit to the General Assembly, at its forty-eighth session, a report under the agenda item entitled "Programmes and activities to promote peace in the world".

My delegation and the other delegations that have sponsored this draft resolution, designed to maximize activities and programmes to promote peace in the world, will be extremely grateful for members' support of our text, which we trust will be adopted by consensus.

(Mrs. Castro de Barish, Costa Rica)

I should like to take this opportunity to express our support for draft resolution A/46/L.18 that will shortly be introduced by the representative of Poland. Its subtitle shows that there are various options for promoting the attainment of peace and stability in the world.

We are convinced that the military option is not the only one, although of critical importance; but we must foster democracy, freedom, development, economic and human resources and the protection of the environment so that peace can become a reality.

Accordingly, we have welcomed this initiative and we have joined the sponsors of that draft resolution, which is entitled, "Contribution of the Institute of East-West Dynamics to programmes and activities to promote peace in the world".

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I now call on the representative of Poland, who will introduce draft resolution A/46/L.18.

Mr. MROZIEWICZ (Poland): The promotion of peace in the world may take various forms. In addition to steps towards disarmament, pragmatic measures may be conducive to the attainment of this principal objective confronting us. That is why the Polish delegation is a sponsor of the draft resolution on programmes and activities to promote peace in the world, which has just been introduced by the representative of Costa Rica. That is also why we have the honour, on behalf of Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, France, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Ukraine, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, to introduce under this agenda item draft resolution A/46/L.18 on the Institute of East-West Dynamics.

(Mr. Mroziewicz, Poland)

The Institute was established in the United States two years ago at the initiative of the Conference on Resolving the Problems, Defining the Opportunities: A Project for Peace, hosted by the United Nations at its Headquarters in January 1989, following the dramatic changes in the East-West platform and the transformations within Eastern Europe, initiated by the developments in Poland in 1989. Its purpose has been to promote the removal of political and economic barriers among developed market-economy countries. Accelerated economic progress and adjustments are critically needed.

The development of blueprints for training in various management techniques, legal practices, parliamentary procedures and other professional skills are the Institute's main fields of interest. Various types of programmes are being prepared in consultation with several universities in order to work out a comprehensive curriculum so that universities and international organizations can train managers and other professional staff. The Institute will also run a parallel training programme for parliamentarians within the framework of the Decade of International Law.

As part of its programme for managers, the Institute will arrange for appropriate internships to be made available by the private sector. Thus, the scope of activities of the Institute of East-West Dynamics remains clearly within the purview of the United Nations, especially if we take into account the much advocated intentions to bring more pragmatism to the Organization's endeavours designed to assist interested Member States in restructuring their economies.

(Mr. Mroziewicz, Poland)

Under the draft resolution, the Assembly would recognize the transition to more democratic systems currently under way in several countries, as well as the fact that facilitating this process should not be left outside the scope of interest of our Organization. In this context, in one of the preambular paragraphs the Assembly would express support for the strengthening of political, social and economic links among all countries and regions of the world by promoting greater contact, exchanges and sharing of experience and expertise.

Under the draft resolution the Assembly would welcome the establishment of the Institute and also recommend examining, in its further activities, issues and problems of the transitional process, in order to ease the readjustment burden and alleviate possible tensions which may undermine international stability and peace. In the draft resolution the Assembly would express the hope that the Inscitute will receive the widest possible support through voluntary contributions by public and private sectors.

The draft resolution has no financial implications for the United Nations system. Let me express my earnest hope that it will be adopted without a vote.

Mrs. KODIKARA (Philippines): Even as we speak in this Hall dedicated to the promotion of peace in the world, another peace conference, this time in Madrid and focused on the long-festering Arab-Israeli conflict, has just been convened. A week ago the Paris Conference on Cambodia concluded its work with the signing of peace agreements that define and guarantee a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian conflict. Last September agreements achieved in New York between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberacion Nacional marked a further step towards peace in Central America. Months earlier the Baltic States were back at peace with themselves and on terms of sovereign equality with the

(Mrs. Kodikara, Philippines)

neighbouring States. These and a host, albeit a finite number, of other positive developments have come on the heels of the truly remarkable changes in super-Power relations during the past few years. Indeed, the end of the cold war has warmed the prospects for world peace.

With so much to be justly jubilant about, distinguished speakers from all corners of the world have stood at this very rostrum singing paeans to and waxing eloquent about the dawning of a new age, a new world order. There also have been all sorts of calculations of the so-called peace dividends.

But, as the Secretary-General has noted in his report on this agenda item,

"The ending of the cold war ... has not created a peaceful world."

(A/46/549, para. 36)

One reason for this is obvious: we reap only to the extent of what we have sown. Peace dividends are possible only when and where peace investments are made.

Just like economic investments, peacemaking and peace-keeping involve risks, and the returns may take time to materialize. But it is heartening that the ways of peace are such that no peace gesture is so small that it loses significance, even as no peace effort is so great that it becomes impossible.

To mark this year's observance of the International Day of Peace, President Corazon Aquino proclaimed the week of 7 to 14 September Peace Toys Week in the Philippines. It was not so much to make light of the rigours of peacemaking as to draw the interest of our young to fun without guns and to a future without violence. Also, in line with this year's theme for the International Day of Peace, the Archbishop of Manila issued a pastoral letter to all churches inviting them to hold candle-lighting ceremonies on 17 September last.

(Mrs. Kodikara, Philippines)

To promote national reconciliation and peace with justice in the Philippines, negotiation efforts are continuing between our Government and the estranged elements of our society. Recently military officers charged with complicity in the failed coups against our constitutional authority were released from detention to encourage their leaders to forswear further violence. Talks at the provincial level with leftist insurgents are being vigorously pursued. The young Government of the autonomous region in southern Philippines is being provided with all requisite assistance and funds from our scarce resources to enable it to foster peace and development. The former First Lady and her family have been given permission to return to the country.

These peace investments and others, without doubt, present risks to our country. But the challenges to durable peace can be hurdled only if they are faced squarely. The cause of peace is, after all, not for the weak of heart. If lasting peace is attainable at all, unwavering determination will achieve it.

My delegation has joined Costa Rica and others in sponsoring draft resolution A/46/L.15, and we also support draft resolution A/46/L.18, introduced by the representative of Poland, in the hope that the Assembly will adopt both draft resolutions by consensus. For we believe that peace-mongering can be more potent than its alternative.

If rumours of war have in the past succeeded in actually incensing unwilling combatants into tragic conflagrations, then it is all the more possible for gestures of peace to triumph by prodding sensible peoples to the negotiating table. The message of peace is universal, and its promotion is always a shared experience.

Mr. SIDOROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): A major aspect of the issue before us is that it is aimed at further mobilizing the efforts of the international community to form a qualitatively new world structure. The Soviet delegation has studied carefully the Secretary-General's report (A/46/549), from which one can clearly see that the efforts towards peace undertaken at the governmental level are being successfully supplemented by parallel efforts of non-governmental organizations and social and scientific circles within the framework of measures to strengthen world order. Such programmes and efforts as can be seen from the report are being carried on in all regions of the world.

In our view, draft resolution A/46/L.15, introduced by the representative of Costa Rica, adequately reflects the urgency of the task of continuing efforts to give assistance to the United Nations in respect of ensuring world security.

Draft resolution A/46/L.18, introduced by Poland, relates to activities of the Institute of East-West Dynamics with a view to giving practical assistance to societies undergoing a transitional period of development and assisting the formation of democratic institutes and market mechanisms. From this draft resolution it can be seen quite clearly that to construct a reliable and just world order it is necessary to have international cooperation in the social and economic development of all members of the world community by extending contacts and exchanging experience and knowledge.

Considering the thrust of both draft resolutions the Soviet Union has joined their sponsors and hopes that they will be universally supported here.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The General Assembly will now proceed to consider the draft resolutions before it.

The General Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.15, entitled "Programmes and activities to promote peace in the world". I have just been informed that Côte d'Ivoire has been added to the list of sponsors.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/46/L.15 unanimously?

Draft resolution A/46/L.15 was adopted (resolution 46/14).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.18, entitled "Contribution of the Institute of East-West Dynamics to programmes and activities to promote peace in the world". I am informed that Guatemala and El Salvador have been added to the list of sponsors.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/46/L.18?

Draft resolution A/46/L.18 was adopted (resolution 46/15).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I shall now call on representatives wishing to explain their position on the resolutions just adopted. May I remind them that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. HIENSCH (Netherlands): On behalf of the European Community and its member States I should like to make a few comments on the resolution concerning "Programmes and activities to promote peace in the world", which the General Assembly has just adopted by consensus.

(Mr. Hiensch, Netherlands)

Allow me first to recall the full support that the European Community and its member States have always given to the objectives of the International Year of Peace.

However, the European Community and its member States have reservations on certain aspects of the resolution before us. As they have done on previous occasions, the European Community and its member States feel they must once again draw the General Assembly's attention to the guidelines for international years laid down in 1980 which are respected neither by General Assembly resolution 44/11 nor by the resolution that has just been adopted. The fear of the European Community and its member States seems to have come true with the inclusion on the agenda of the General Assembly of an item entitled "Programmes and activities to promote peace in the world" which amounts to perpetuating an exercise that was to have been completed during the year in question, that is, by the end of 1986.

Moreover, the European Community and its member States wish to point out that operative paragraph 3 of the resolution refers to the United Nations Peace Studies Unit, to which is entrusted what appears to be the follow-up to the International Year of Peace. The European Community and its member States doubt the need for or the usefulness of such a structure in so far as the promotion of peace in the world is the very reason for the existence of the United Nations. On a purely administrative level it appears to be counterproductive to entrust the Peace Studies Unit with tasks as difficult and varied as those mentioned in operative paragraph 3 of the resolution.

We must insist on restating these reservations so that they can be taken into account in the drafting of the report which the Secretary-General, in operative paragraph 6 of the resolution, is requested to submit.

(Mr. Hiensch, Netherlands)

However, because of their concern for peace, for the strengthening of international security and for the solution of conflicts by peaceful means the delegations on whose behalf I have the honour to speak have joined the consensus in spite of their serious reservations about the resolution which we have just examined.

Ms. SKYMOEN (Norway): On the behalf of the five Nordic countries - Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Sweden and Norway - I should like to state that whereas we have joined in the consensus on the resolution we do, however, have reservations about certain elements in the text. In this regard the Nordic countries endorse the explanation of position just made by the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the States members of the European Community.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We have thus concluded consideration of agenda item 22.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT: As all members are aware, I am conducting extensive consultations with all delegations. One of the matters we shall be discussing is the rationalization of the General Assembly's agenda. With regard to these discussions, I shall appreciate it greatly if, in considering any item to be inscribed on the agenda or any draft resolution to be submitted, delegations will think seriously about whether bringing forward any matter would enhance the prestige, authority and efficiency of the General Assembly. The submission of a resolution involves much work for the Assembly, for the Secretariat and for all member Governments. If we were able to achieve an objective by means other than a resolution we should be helping to realize the objectives of the consultations that I am undertaking at present.

AGENDA ITEM 137

RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/46/578)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The report of the Secretary-General on the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly in the economic, social and related fields has been distributed this morning in document A/46/578.

Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana): The Group of 77 has in various ways demonstrated its commitment to the process of restructuring the United Nations to make it more effective in the discharge of the responsibilities entrusted to it by member States under the Charter. We have initiated several proposals for reform in the economic and social fields. A recent initiative resulted in the consensus adoption, by the General Assembly, of resolution 45/264 of 13 May 1991. In this resolution the General Assembly agreed on a number of reform measures relating to the organization and functioning of the Economic

(Mr. Kufuor, Ghana)

and Social Council - measures that we hope will enhance the prestige, authority and effectiveness of the Council, particularly in the fulfilment of its coordinating role.

That resolution established a programme for carrying out the restructuring exercise. Pursuant to the resolution, the General Assembly decided to undertake, at this session, a review of its subsidiary machinery, as well as the machinery of the Economic and Social Council. This review should be seen as a further step in the process of restructuring and revitalizing the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields - the process that the resolution initiated.

We should remind ourselves of the overall objective of the restructuring exercise: to ensure

> "effective and efficient functioning of the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields in order to be more responsive to the needs of enhancing international economic cooperation and promoting the development of the developing countries". (resolution 45/177)

In this regard, we wish to emphasize that the mandates and priorities of the subsidiary bodies, as decided by the United Nations, remain valid and must be preserved. Therefore the restructuring exercise is not intended to change the mandates or to reorder the priorities of the subsidiary bodies; rather, it is concerned with improving the performance and programme delivery of those bodies. In most cases restructuring will entail the strengthening of the bodies concerned. For instance, there is a clear need to strengthen the regional economic commissions - particularly those located in developing countries.

(Mr. Kufuor, Ghana)

Admittedly this is not an easy task, as there are almost 150 subsidiary bodies to be covered by the restructuring exercise. The Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council devoted considerable time and effort to an examination of the whole gamut of subsidiary bodies and, in the process, gained some useful insights into their organization and functioning. Unfortunately, however, it was unable to make any agreed recommendations. Nevertheless, the Group of 77 believes that the spirit of reform is still with us and that we should build on the experience of the Special Commission by making use of the insights gained and by avoiding the pitfalls that, in the end, consumed it.

As happened in the case of the Special Commission, it appears to us that we do not, at this session, have time to undertake a review of all these bodies. But, if we are to adhere to our mandate, we cannot adopt an improvised or ad hoc approach and focus on a number of bodies selected at random for restructuring. The approach must be comprehensive if consistency is to be ensured. We believe that comprehensive criteria should be elaborated for the purpose of evaluating the performance of all the subsidiary bodies.

Even if we were unable to examine all the subsidiary bodies at this session we should be assured that those that had not been examined would be evaluated on the basis of the original criteria. However, the criteria would have to be applied flexibly, as the peculiarities of some bodies might make exceptions necessary. But the need for such exceptions would have to be clearly demonstrated. Thus we would ensure that our work was systematic and consistent. A schedule for examination of all the subsidiary bodies will have to be agreed upon as part of a package for continuation of the restructuring process.

(Mr. Kufuor, Ghana)

All the principles agreed upon in resolution 45/264 will, of course, apply. However, let me underline the importance of the principle set out in paragraph 3 (c) of the annex to that resolution, which states:

"Political will is an essential prerequisite for enhancing international cooperation. The socio-economic goals of the United Nations will remain unachievable in the absence of the requisite political will of all States". (A/RES/45/264, p. 3)

(Mr. Kufuor, Ghana)

The way the United Nations system as a whole discharges its responsibilities, whether effectively or otherwise, depends to a greater extent on what its Member States allow it to be, and usually it mirrors the values and policies of the major actors. A close analysis of the bodies that the developed countries have identified as in need of restructuring will reveal that the self-same developed countries have not been participating actively in those bodies, and, as dominant actors, their absence has affected the deliberations and performances of the bodies concerned. For instance, one cannot seriously discuss science and technology for development in the United Nations in the absence of the industrialized countries. That is why we wish to emphasize that political will must be demonstrated by all throughout the restructuring process and beyond.*

I should like to clarify one issue relating to the work of the reformed Economic and Social Council. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/264, the Economic and Social Council at its organizational session will select the themes for the high-level and coordinating segments. Whatever inputs may come from other bodies in the United Nations system are intended to facilitate the decision-making process of the Council in this regard and are not to be understood as final. A definitve decision will be made by the Economic and Social Council itself at its organizational session.

The Group of 77 wishes to pledge its cooperation and support to the President in the discharge of his responsibilities relating to this item. We shall, as always, be constructive.

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* Mr. Pennaneach (Togo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands): The issue I am addressing today on behalf of the European Community and its member States is an urgent one and, at the same time, still a sensitive one. The restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields needs to be carried further by taking decisive steps forward, and, at the same time, we need to consider carefully together in an open dialogue what the best way forward actually is.

This issue is urgent because we have to use the present momentum. Probably never before has there been so much trust in the United Nations as there is now. West and South and East do want to put the United Nations to better use. This issue is sensitive and delicate because the restructuring and revitalization of the social and economic sectors have a long history, and not always one of continuous success. The Special Commission analysed and thoroughly examined the functioning of the United Nations system in the social and economic fields, but it failed in the end to propose concrete recommendations. We feel, nevertheless, that the work of the Special Commission served a good purpose, as did the discussions that followed, first in the Economic and Social Council and later in the General Assembly.

Those discussions contributed to a better understanding of the functioning of the United Nations in these areas and served as a launching pad for many good ideas that are now increasingly coming to the fore. They also led to some concrete improvements, particularly in the functioning of the Economic and Social Council, culminating in resolution 45/264, adopted by the resumed session of the General Assembly in May this year. We regard the results of that resumed session as an important step forward in this process.

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

All of this has contributed to new mutual trust and to the conviction that we can and must place the United Nations in a position from which it can meet the challenges not only of today but also of tomorrow. People have high expectations with regard to the United Nations and want the United Nations to be instrumental in bringing about a new world order - one that will include the social and economic fields as well. To reach that objective, we have to adapt the structures of the United Nations and revitalize the way we deal with some of the issues in it.

The resumed forty-fifth session of the General Assembly had three major achievements in this respect. First, the basic principles and guidelines for the restructuring and revitalization process were established. Secondly, agreement was reached on a set of measures by which a consolidated and more thematic Economic and Social Council was established, in which substantive and high-level dialogue on major policy issues in the social, economic and related fields will be at the centre. Thirdly, a non-exclusive agenda and a logical timetable were drawn up, reaching as far as the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, for future action in the field of restructuring and revitalization in the economic, social and related fields.

At its current session the General Assembly should review the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the Assembly with the objective of possible restructuring and revitalization and of improving their reporting responsibilities and procedures with a view to avoiding duplication.

It was agreed that the review should be based, inter alia, on the following criteria: First, it should ensure that the programme delivery of a subsidiary body meets the needs of Member States and that it is consistent

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

with the goals and priorities of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. Secondly, the same basic principles and guidelines for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the subsidiary machinery should be applied as agreed upon in resolution 45/264. Thirdly, the subsuming of highly technical functions of subsidiary bodies and expert groups by the Economic and Social Council should be avoided. Lastly, it should ensure that the subsidiary machinery in the economic, social and related fields is able to offer sound recommendations and advice as input into - and not a substitute for - consideration and decisions by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General was requested to provide the General Assembly at this session with relevant information, including information on the status of subsidiary bodies and their reporting procedures, in order to facilitate the review of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. We should like to express our appreciation to the Secretariat for the information it has provided to us.

During the last summer session of the Economic and Social Council, in July 1991 - the last in that form - a preliminary exchange of views took place on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/264. In our statement on behalf of the European Community and its member States, a number of observations were made with regard to the restructuring of the subsidiary machinery. We noted in particular that many of the subsidiary bodies function reasonably well and that there is therefore no need to enter into a comprehensive review of all the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in the social, economic and related fields.

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

We also made it clear that the restructuring is not aimed at eliminating the consideration of particular issues but, on the contrary, at giving more qualitative and better-focused attention to them in order to increase the ability of the United Nations system to deal effectively with these issues. We observed that the restructuring should focus on those issues that need to be addressed more effectively and on bodies that are widely seen as not fulfilling the tasks for which they were established. Lastly, we recognized that high-quality expert advice and relevant policy recommendations are needed to allow the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly better to understand the issues, to develop common policies and to agree on appropriate action.

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

In the same debate in the Economic and Social Council, the European Community and its member States mentioned as a non-exclusive list four specific subjects that deserve better treatment in the United Nations: natural resources; new and renewable sources of energy; science and technology for development; and technical cooperation between developing countries. Other delegations raised the subject of food, and particularly the role of the World Food Council in this respect.

Various options for improving the manner in which the United Nations is addressing these issues can be considered. At the intergovernmental level, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as Charter bodies, are responsible for system-wide policies on the issues concerned. These policies could be discussed where appropriate on a biennial basis under a relevant agenda item. Another possibility would be to devote a part of the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council to a review of the activities of the United Nations system in a particular field or fields once in a while. It could also be desirable, depending on the topicality of a particular issue, that the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly at some point give special attention to these subjects in a high-level discussion or segment.

We suggest that the discussions in the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly mainly focus on the activities of the United Nations system in the various fields; on setting priorities in the work programmes; on coordination between the United Nations organizations involved; and on the promotion of international exchanges on specific aspects of the issues concerned. They should give general guidelines to expert bodies in the respective areas, and to the Secretariat support structures, with regard to their work programmes. Both the Economic and Social Council and the General

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

Assembly could also make specific requests to expert bodies for input to debates in United Nations conferences and other high-level meetings.

At the expert level, it is generally recognized that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly need high-quality expert advice in order better to understand the issues involved. They should be provided with thorough analyses and relevant policy recommendations or options, on the basis of which they could give guidance to future work in the United Nations on these issues.

With regard to the issue of science and technology for development, we propose that the present Committee on Science and Technology for Development be transformed into an expert body, using the present Advisory Committee on Science and Technology for Development as a basis. With regard to the issue of new and renewable sources of energy, we would suggest that the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy also be transformed into an expert body, making use of its present ad hoc expert arrangements.

These expert bodies, which would report through the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly, should have a policy-oriented approach by promoting international cooperation in the fields of science and technology for development and new and renewable sources of energy, for example, through encouraging specific seminars and workshops on priority issues, by giving policy advice through their reports on priority issues - particularly to developing countries - and by providing input into deliberations in the United Nations on issues where science and technology for development or new and renewable sources of energy have an important role to play. The expert bodies should consist of a limited number of experts. The experts should be of outstanding quality, knowledgeable on international cooperation in the fields

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

of science and technology for development and new and renewable sources of energy, and policy-oriented.

The composition of the expert bodies should guarantee that sufficient representative expertise on their subjects is available so that an exchange of knowledge and experience can take place, while at the same time ensuring that the work of the expert body is in line particularly with the needs and interests of developing countries. The experts could be nominated by the Secretary-General for a fixed period of time after appropriate consultations.

With regard to the issue of natural resources, we suggest that the Committee on Natural Resources be discontinued. Expert advice on the three main areas which the Committee is discussing - water, energy and mineral resources - should be sought elsewhere in the United Nations system. Expert advice on minerals could be sought in particular from the Committee on Commodities of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, since that Committee is also concerned with minerals. Expert advice on water development should be sought from the United Nations Environment Programme and possibly the Department for Technical Cooperation for Development, the regional economic commissions, and other similar competent bodies. Expert advice on various aspects of energy could be added to the mandate of an expert body on new and renewable sources of energy.

The question of technical cooperation among developing countries should, in our opinion, become the responsibility of the United Nations Development Programme Governing Council. The Programme should devote a special segment of its Governing Council meeting to the issue every two years and report on that to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. This arrangement should become operational after the High-Level Committee on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries has conducted a final review of the

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

Buenos Aires Plan of Action and has assured that the ongoing strategy for technical cooperation among developing countries is well in place and being implemented.

With regard to food, we recommend that the Secretary-General undertake a study on the relationship of the World Food Council and the governing bodies of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme.

Finally, in the light of these suggestions, appropriate adjustments should be made to the Secretariat structures so as to reflect these changes and to ensure that available expertise within the United Nations Secretariat is consolidated in order to improve the quality of its output. These suggested improvements in the functioning of some of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly would, if agreed, be another important step in the restructuring and revitalization process. Obviously, it would be only one more step, since the broader issue of overlap in the agendas of the Second and Third Committees, and also of the Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, will be discussed during the next session of the General Assembly.

We look forward to working with others on this issue, and we hope that consultations can begin in the near future on the basis of concrete proposals.

Mr. KAARIA (Finland): I have the honour to address the important issue of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields on behalf of the five Nordic countries - Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and my own country, Finland.

Both the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and the new International Development Strategy recognized the critical role that the

(Mr. Kaaria, Finland)

United Nations and the specialized agencies should have in facilitating international cooperation in the economic and social fields. However, there is a widely held opinion that in these fields the United Nations system is not responsive enough and does not work as efficiently as the great problems and challenges facing mankind would require.

(Mr. Kaaria, Finland)

The Nordic countries have a strong interest in strengthening international cooperation, notably through the United Nations. As the largest contributors on a per capita basis to the United Nations system, we have an obligation, not least to our own taxpayers, to ensure the effectiveness and the impact of the Organization's activities. We therefore welcomed enthusiastically the agreement reached last spring, on the initiative of the Group of 77, to launch economic and social reforms. Resolution 45/264 outlined a broad range of issues involved in the reform process and established a timetable according to which some aspects of these reforms would be addressed.

It was agreed that the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly would review the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly with the objective of possible restructuring and revitalization. In addition, the reporting responsibilities and procedures of these bodies would be reviewed with the aim of avoiding duplication.

As outlined in the discussion paper submitted by the Nordic countries for the resumed session last spring, the goal of our reform process was, and continues to be, to increase the economic and social efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations. This objective can be reached only by involving the entire Organization in the reform process. The respective roles and tasks of the various United Nations bodies need to be better defined so as to achieve a complementary and coherent whole. It would therefore be difficult to address the particular issue at hand at this forty-sixth session - the reform of subsidiary bodies - without outlining our thinking on the Organization as a whole: the reform of one part of the system has implications for other parts.

(Mr. Kaaria, Finland)

In reviewing the subsidiary bodies we must examine in detail the division of labour and the delegation of powers among the General Assembly and its Main Committees, the Economic and Social Council and the subsidiary machinery. I wish to elaborate upon the picture the Nordic countries painted of the hierarchical system during last July's general debate in the Economic and Social Council. The three functional levels of this hierarchy are the political, policy-making, and advisory and operational levels.

The General Assembly's political function extends to the economic and social fields. The role of the General Assembly should be strengthened to give its decisions the heaviest possible political weight. In our discussion paper for the resumed session, as well as in the Economic and Social Council statement and other contexts, we have pointed out ways of increasing the economic and social impact of the General Assembly's decisions. Basically it is a matter of limiting decisions at the highest level only to issues of decisive importance. The messages of this body should be heard and its decisions should influence decision makers both in Governments and in other institutions.

The Economic and Social Council constitutes the policy-making level, dealing not only with international economic cooperation but also with national and sectoral policies in areas where the United Nations possesses the necessary expertise. It should also guide the work of its subsidiary bodies so as to obtain advice and recommendations on the areas and issues as needed. Furthermore, the Economic and Social Council should provide governance and central coordination for the operational activities of the United Nations system so that these are clearly linked to policy priorities in fields where the Organization is bringing to bear the comparative strength of its position.

(Mr. Kaaria, Finland)

The primary focus of the work of the Economic and Social Council should be on developing countries. However, as the policies and choices of industrialized States have a major impact on the world economic environment and on progress in developing countries, the Council should deal with these policies as well. An encouraging example of this trend was the informal discussion this summer on the impact of East-West relations on the world economy.

Resolution 45/264 is a useful point of departure for reviewing the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. It suggests how we may ensure that the programme delivery of a subsidiary body meets the needs of Member States in a field where the United Nations wields significant influence. We should further see to it that highly technical functions of subsidiary bodies and expert groups are not subsumed into the Economic and Social Council itself.

Moreover, resolution 45/264 points the way to ensuring that the subsidiary machinery is strengthened in such a way as to provide sound recommendations and advice to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The work of the subsidiary bodies should be to complement, not to substitute for, the political and policy-making functions. These parameters, which were spelled out in the resolution, are consonant with the ideas of the Nordic countries and with the outline I have sketched.

A prerequisite for achieving these goals is reciprocal communication between the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, on the one hand, and their subsidiary bodies, on the other. In order to be prepared to give their expert advice and recommendations, the subsidiary bodies should have sufficient guidance and information on issues and areas that the Economic

(Mr. Kaaria, Finland)

and Social Council and the General Assembly are to tackle. At the same time, the subsidiary bodies should have sufficient flexibility and freedom to be innovative and forward-looking in their work.

Given the United Nations hierarchy of responsibilities, there would appear to be little need for subsidiary bodies to be political in nature or in function. Seldom is there a need for detailed attention to political issues at that level. A primary objective of the review, addressing the question of whether subsidiary bodies should be expert or intergovernmental bodies, would therefore be to explore ways of increasing their expertise. This expertise should guarantee that substantive real-world issues are introduced into, analysed by, and submitted for policy decision-making in the United Nations.

The advance report of the Secretary-General covers the full range of subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The number is large and the task seems overwhelming. But the Nordic countries feel that it is important to keep up the momentum of the process started in May and to hold to the timetable agreed upon. In order to devote sufficient time to studying individual bodies, it would perhaps be advisable to start with a limited number of bodies and agree on a timetable for continuation of the review. A successful review of a handful of bodies would also serve as encouragement, building confidence in the process of reform.

(Mr. Kaaria, Finland)

In our discussion paper we proposed that the following bodies should be reviewed and we hope that they will constitute a group of bodies with which the work can begin: the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy; the High-Level Meeting on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries; the Committee on Natural Resources; and the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development.

Without going into further detail at this time concerning the review itself, let me assure you that the Nordic countries will be prepared to participate constructively in any more informal meeting that will look further into the details.

Before concluding, allow me to present to the General Assembly some ideas the Nordic countries have developed on United Nations operational activities for development, which form part of the subsidiary machinery. We have presented these ideas before in the context of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme and the Economic and Social Council.

Three years ago, the Nordic countries established the so-called Nordic United Nations project as a contribution to the strengthening of the activities of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, especially in its operational activities. We see a close link between the project and the ongoing reform process. The final report of the project was presented in New York in May 1991 and subsequently by the Nordic embassies in their host countries.

The most important findings of the Nordic Governments with regard to the strengthening of the economic and social sectors could be summarized as follows: first, the need for a high-level forum in which Member States can

(Mr. Kaaria, Finland)

discuss development issues and give overall policy guidance for United Nations operational activities for development; secondly, the need for more effective governance of United Nations operational activities to provide the organizations involved with the necessary support and guidance on a continuous basis; and thirdly, the need to improve the funding system of United Nations operational activities in order to be able to meet current and emerging needs on a more stable and equitable basis.

The Nordic countries are therefore proposing that these aspects of operational activities be included as part of the reform process in the economic and social fields. As for the timetable, we support the recommendation of the recent joint meeting of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination that this topic should be discussed in substance at the high-level meetings of the regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1992. This would also, in our view, pave the way for discussions at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly on the roles of the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee. The Nordic countries intend to present a draft decision to this effect in the Second Committee at a later date.

The world finds itself in a new, increasingly interdependent, sometimes complicated but also promising situation which warrants restructuring in many areas. In this world the United Nations system cannot afford to run the risk of further resource diversification and marginalization in the field of development. The Nordic countries will continue to participate actively in the reform process to help avoid such developments.

Mr. KIRSCH (Canada): As we all know, the United Nations, under the leadership of Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar, has achieved new respect and a more prominent role in the world community, a role which is well deserved and which needs to be maintained and strengthened. The renewed vitality of multilateralism is a development which Canada very much welcomes, believers as we have been, since its inception, in the central role which the United Nations should play on the world stage.

However, the progress made so far in the fields of peace-keeping and the resolution of regional conflicts also needs to be translated into new vitality for the United Nations in the social and economic fields. This is not a new challenge, but it is incumbent upon us now to rise successfully to the occasion. A renewed interest in and commitment to reform bode well for our work.

Several reform initiatives are under way or under discussion. Foremost among these are the discussions on strengthening the United Nations humanitarian assistance capacity. Apart from United Nations peace-keeping and peace-making efforts, no other United Nations activity is more important to Canadians than the United Nations responsibility in leading the international community in the delivery of emergency assistance the world over. We need to take decisive action on this subject during this session of the General Assembly. Important proposals, wholeheartedly supported by Canada, have also been put forward for restructuring the Secretariat, including its senior levels and the process of entry into it.

Still other proposals for the reform of the General Assembly's procedures provide some very welcome ideas on how to streamline our work and make it more efficient. We have also heard calls for a number of other reforms. The next

(Mr. Kirsch, Canada)

Secretary-General will clearly be called upon to exercise extraordinary political acumen, leadership and management skills. These qualities should be of prime importance in the selection of the next Secretary-General.

In the economic field, interest in reform has been no less in evidence. The adoption by consensus last spring of resolution 45/264 was an important achievement, one which set the stage for further significant reform throughout the next year. The discussions at that time focused on the Economic and Social Council and resulted in the creation of a single substantive session of four to five weeeks which will take place in alternate years in New York and Geneva between May and July. A high-level component was established for ministerial and high-level participation on one or more major economic or social themes and a coordination component was likewise created to focus attention on the activities of the United Nations system in selected economic and social areas. Further elaboration of these new structures will be needed.

The consensus achieved last spring, however, was only the first step in a process of reform. That process calls for the review and possible restructuring this year of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council with a view to increasing their efficiency and effectiveness and avoiding duplication. Increased participation by experts and non-governmental organizations would be a positive development. A number of interesting ideas concerning some subsidiary bodies have already begun to circulate informally. Canada will consider these with an open mind.

(Mr. Kirsch, Canada)

It is essential that subjects important to Member States be addressed in a better way. It should not be assumed, however, that existing structures necessarily provide the best way to get the job done. At each stage of debate on an issue, there should be "value added" so that the maximum benefit can be derived from the Secretariat's limited resources. Repetitious debate serves little purpose. The United Nations deliberative bodies should also focus on those areas where the United Nations has a comparative advantage over other international institutions. This is the case, for example, in the field of environment where we hope that the United Nations will undertake some major new initiatives by next summer and establish suitable intergovernmental structures to deal with them.

The reform of the Economic and Social Council is important to Canada which has been concerned at its progressive marginalization. In addition to the restructuring of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, we believe some aspects of its work methods merit revision. It is clear that the standard work method of negotiating has produced very meagre results. Many texts have been negotiated, but few if any of these have had more than a marginal impact on economic developments in Member countries.

In Canada's view, attempts to negotiate mutually binding commitments in any sphere, but particularly in the economic field, should only emerge at the end of a process of study and analysis which clearly reveals a complementarity of interest among the various participants. Taking up an economic policy area with the idea a priori that some kind of text or understanding is going to be negotiated is, in our view, putting the cart before the horse. Further, it impedes a frank and exhaustive study and exchange of views on policy problems

(Mr. Kirsch, Canada)

inasmuch as participants become cautious when they know their remarks may come back to haunt them in a negotiating context.

All this is not to say that the Council should forget about its negotiating role for ever. But we believe that Member States should concentrate particularly on adapting its analytic approach and work methods to the new consensus which is emerging on economic issues - the consequence of interdependence and the appropriateness of market-oriented economic policies. We are confident that diligent research and debate on old and new economic problems, conducted along the lines of the new convergence of understanding on economic issues, will inevitably produce new communities of interest among Member States. Negotiations on new agreements and instruments will emerge spontaneously from this process, and the Council will justly enjoy the esteem and prestige it will garner as the intellectual godfather of these agreements.

We can no longer continue with the "business as usual" approach if the United Nations is to assume its rightful role as a key player in the international economic environment. Radical change is called for - not just mere tinkering with the system. Canada stands ready to participate in this important debate in a positive spirit.

Mr. LAVROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Our discussion today on the restructuring of the socio-economic activities of the United Nations is being held against a background of revitalized efforts in the recent past to bring about a broader reform of the Organization. Various ideas on the restructuring of the work of international mechanisms, improving the organization of the sessions and improving the structures of the Secretariat, both within and outside the United Nations system, merit the closest attention.

(Mr. Lavrov, USSR)

These issues are directly connected with ensuring the effectiveness of the United Nations in all fields. Therefore the task of reform, as we see it, is of primary political significance for the further work of the structures of multilateral cooperation.

From this standpoint, we are gratified to find that the declared readiness to make changes in United Nations activities is being increasingly transformed into general agreement on concrete measures whose practical implementation could help to consolidate the authority of the Organization and define its new role in the multilateral dialogue with respect to all problems within its competence, including, of course, those of international cooperation in the economic, social and related fields.

A significant step in this direction was the outcome of the resumed forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The understandings set forth in resolution 45/264 are not only a first step in the process of reforming the socio-economic sector of the United Nations but also part of the strategy of further efforts to improve that major area of the Organization's activities aimed at enhancing its effectiveness and its adaptability to new political and economic realities. Today, the main task is to maintain this tempo and arrive at such decisions with respect to subsidiary organs as are suitable for carrying out the measures set forth in resolution 45/264 for the reform of the Economic and Social Council.

We feel that the decisions of the General Assembly at its current session concerning reform should be aimed at rationalizing the structures of those subsidiary organs and converting them to expert bodies in order to heighten their professionalism and competence. The criteria for this have already been approved in resolution 45/264.

(Mr. Lavrov, USSR)

It would be advisable to concentrate our attention first on improving the work of those subsidiary organs whose reform was recommended at the meetings of the Special Committee of the Economic and Social Council in 1987 and 1988 and again during the resumed forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Such an approach would enable us to derive the maximum benefit from the time available to us.

As an example, I should like to mention the activities of the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development, the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on New and Renewable Energy Sources.

The extensive information now available about the work of those committees and the experience with participation in their sessions lead us to the conclusion that there is a need for radical changes in their activities. We feel that the time has come to transform those intergovernmental committees into expert bodies consisting of leading specialists in the specific areas of knowledge which would represent research currents and new schools of thought as broadly as is possible in the United Nations.

In this regard, in order to make United Nations activities more expert in the scientific and technical areas, it would be advisable to consider the possibilities of an existing structure, namely, the Advisory Committee on Science and Technology.

Instead of the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on New and Renewable Energy Sources, we could create an expert body on issues of energy policy, which would meet regularly to make a comprehensive analysis and forecast trends in the world energy situation, interacting with other multilateral structures in that sphere.

(Mr. Lavrov, USSR)

The principal purpose of converting those organs into expert bodies would be to ensure a profoundly professional analysis of trends in the development of science and technology, in the use of natural resources and energy sources, including new and renewable energy sources, and also in preparing forecasts for the development of future trends in those areas.

(Mr. Lavrov, USSR)

Such an approach is applicable to other United Nations bodies as well, especially in the economic and social sphere. On the whole, the "expertization" of auxiliary bodies in that sphere would enable them to make scientifically based professional recommendations in the Economic and Social Council with regard to using the capabilities of the United Nations for development and cooperation in specific areas of practical interest to Member States. Such recommendations would be the basis for the examination of relevant issues in the Council and for the adoption by the General Assembly of political decisions on specific forms of United Nations participation in the development of multilateral cooperation in those areas.

It would probably be useful to structure the work of those expert bodies in such a way as to enable them to take into consideration to the fullest extent what is occurring in those areas in other bodies and organs both within and outside the United Nations system. That would make it possible to avoid duplication of work and would heighten the practical effect of the experts' contribution to the development of programmes of United Nations activity in specific areas. The implementation of such programmes could be guided and coordinated by a renewed Economic and Social Council.

We wish to emphasize that the measures we propose are in no way designed to detract from the significance of the aforementioned issues on the economic agenda of the United Nations. On the contrary, our delegation is anxious to raise the consideration of those issues to a qualitatively new level, giving it a firm scientific and professional basis.

That approach would heighten the effectiveness of the United Nations contribution to the development of multilateral cooperation in all the areas of real interest to most Member States.

(Mr. Lavrov, USSR)

We are also prepared, of course, to discuss any other proposals with regard to subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and we intend to participate actively and constructively in the discussions to be held during this session.

Mr. JIN Yongjian (China) (interpretation from Chinese): At the outset I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and detailed report on the status and the reporting procedure of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in the economic, social and related fields.

In accordance with resolution 45/264, adopted at the resumed meetings of the forty-fifth session last May, the General Assembly at its current session will examine the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

Before making my observations on the item, I should like to reaffirm that the overall objective of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields is, as underlined in General Assembly resolution 45/264, to make the United Nations more effective and efficient

> "'in order to be more responsive to the needs of enhancing international economic cooperation and promoting the development of the developing countries'". (resolution 45/264, annex, para. 1)

This overall objective should, in our view, be embodied in the entire process of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. Any deviation from this objective would deprive the restructuring of its instrinsic meaning.

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

The Chinese delegation has always been supportive of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. In our view, the role that the United Nations has been playing so far in the economic field lags far behind its role in addressing political issues. This is by no means in tune with the ever-worsening economic situation of the developing countries and to a considerable extent does not live up to the expectations of the developing countries. We hope that through the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, particularly by enhancing the effectiveness of the functioning of the bodies in the economic and social fields and improving their working methods, the United Nations will be able to play a greater role in the field of economic development. The recent high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council session was an important step forward in this direction.

We should not fail to see that the past four decades and more have witnessed a considerable expansion in the bodies of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, as a result of developments in the international situation and the changing needs of the Member States. The restructuring of these bodies will not only have a bearing on the interests of the Member States, but also have an impact on all the relevant bodies of the United Nations.

Because of its complex nature, the restructuring exercise can only be a gradual process. Moreover, the restructuring should proceed in a planned and phased fashion with proper focuses. Prior to any major decisions with regard to restructuring in the economic and social fields, there should be extensive consultations and exchanges of views. Major restructuring measures will have to be formulated and implemented on the basis of consensus.

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

We have taken note of the specific proposals some countries have put forward concerning the restructuring of certain subsidiary bodies. These proposals involve, inter alia, the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development, the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy, the Committee on Natural Resources and the High-level Committee on the Review of Technological Cooperation among Developing Countries.

I should like to point out that issues under consideration by these bodies are all important issues that have a bearing on the economic growth and development of the developing countries. Among these bodies, the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development is the only body in the United Nations that undertakes a comprehensive review and extensive policy coordination of issues relating to the development of science and technology. The High-level Committee on the Review of Technological Cooperation among Developing Countries is also the sole intergovernmental forum in the United Nations system engaged in the overall review of policies and projects of technological cooperation.

At present, as the gap between North and South is further widening and developing countries are confronted with aggravated economic difficulties and lag far behind in science and technology, the work of those bodies assumes particular relevance to the developing countries, and therefore must be further strengthened.

It is precisely the importance of the work of those bodies that in our view warrants a serious approach to their efficiency problem. First, the causes of their lack of efficiency should be analysed. Only then will it be proper to discuss effective measures that can address the root causes of the

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

problem. I venture to say that if certain countries displayed more political will and honoured their financial commitments those bodies would enjoy much higher efficiency and play a greater role than they do today.

The subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council involve a large number of bodies in the economic, social and related fields. We are in favour of initiating a comprehensive and systematic review of the terms of reference and reporting procedure of all these bodies. Specific restructuring approaches can begin only upon the basis of such basic understandings. Prior to this, any specific proposal for the dismantling, merging or "expertization" of certain bodies will only, in our view, be premature.

With regard to the establishment of a high-level supervisory mechanism in the field of environment, as proposed by some Member States, we believe that this should be put off for discussion until after the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

The restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields call for concerted efforts by all parties concerned. The Chinese delegation is ready to join other parties in an effort to explore, on the basis of the spirit of resolution 45/264, options and measures of restructuring that can truly contribute to the enhanced role and efficiency of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, and particularly to the system's ability to be more responsive to the development needs of the developing countries.

Mr. MONTAÑO (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Mexico fully supports the views expressed by the representative of Ghana, Chairman of the Group of 77, on the important item before the Assembly today. I should just like to add a few points.

The major changes in the international situation have led to serious consideration of the future of the United Nations and the role its organs should play in the new system of international relations that is now emerging. We have begun a dynamic and gradual process of reform which was given a major impetus last April when resolution 45/264 was adopted under the leadership of the Group of 77.

Mexico has participated actively in the process of reform, for we believe that it will help to enhance the Organization's effectiveness and adapt it to the new international situation. We believe that the present stage is a unique opportunity for invigorating the United Nations so that it can comply fully with its original mandate.

Recently, the Organization and, in particular, the Security Council, has shown that it has considerable capacity to enter into negotiations for the settlement of disputes, a capacity that unfortunately has not been fully used in seeking solutions to the most acute development problems that continue to afflict most of the world's population. Worse still, political triumphs have encouraged some quarters to imagine that the Organization could have additional functions that go well beyond what is set forth in the Charter and in the principles of international law.

The recent general debate in the General Assembly showed clearly that the developing countries' economic and social development problems are not part of the industrialized countries' main concerns. In view of this clear lack of

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

political will and commitment, Members must not forget that the reform of the United Nations will be inadequate unless it is accompanied by a genuine reactivation of the North-South dialogue.

Hence, the importance of the current process of reform. We believe that this process should be guided by a clear mandate from the General Assembly. It cannot be based on practices imposed by one State or by groups of States. The reform must reaffirm the major principles of international law as enshrined in the Charter of the Organization, particularly the respect for sovereignty, non-intervention and the sovereign equality of Member States.

Closely related to this belief is our concern that a process of reform may strengthen some areas to the detriment of others. The revitalization of the United Nations should not be carried out piecemeal. It would be a mistake to expect the Organization to focus on the so-called new items or urgent questions while it leaves aside those items that have been on the agenda for several years and that are still the major and most serious problems confronting mankind.

In this context, reform of the economic and social sectors will be of fundamental importance in restoring a balance to the organs comprising the United Nations and to the content of its agenda so that the Organization can move towards such common goals as the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of economic and social development, which, in fact, is an absolute prerequisite for international peace and security. The reform will work if it is not guided exclusively by simplistic criteria of cost effectiveness, but is rather based on substantive change that will make the organs under review real instruments for economic and social development.

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

My delegation believes that the current process of reform affecting the intergovernmental bodies will necessarily involve the Secretariat, as well. We must thus assess its work and propose some guidelines for action to reform it. Nearly 50 years of existence have understandably produced some inertia in the Secretariat, a situation that should be corrected. We need a more rational structure, a reduction in the higher ranks, an increase in the productivity of mid-level officials. Moreover, we must not fail to take account of a balance in the priority areas with regard to such items as peace and security, economic and social questions, human rights and the development and codification of international law. It is only thus that we will achieve an effective and efficient Organization that is able to devise and implement effective approaches to encourage international cooperation in all fields.

Mr. LICHEM (Austria): Over the last several years, the United Nations has clearly come into its own in the political field. Perhaps it will be possible now to capitalize on the momentum gained in the political sphere in order to revitalize the United Nations in the economic field, as well. Hopefully, it can soon bring its full legitimate weight to bear also on economic, social and related matters. Our world is still bedevilled by any number of economic problems. We owe it to the people beset by poverty and destitution to do whatever we can to alleviate their suffering and help them develop their human potential to the full. An important contribution to this end would be to make the United Nations a more effective instrument in the economic field.

New challenges are taking shape. The integration of economic and social development with the requirement of sustainability vis-à-vis environmental and natural resource systems is well at the core of tomorrow's agenda. In

(Mr. Lichem, Austria)

addition, some of these sectoral issues, such as the environment, economy and finance, trade and such social aspects as population and migration, have become truly global issues and a part of a new interdependent reality.

Over the past 40 years, the United Nations system has grown in leaps and bounds and often haphazardly. New structures were created ad hoc in order to respond to new needs. The main approach taken was sectoral, in line with the wisdom of the time. Agriculture, meteorology, health, trade, labour, industry, geology and mining, nuclear energy, other sources of energy, all have found their more or less independent organizational set-ups with relatively loose coordination among them. We all have been participants for many years in the manifold efforts made in the United Nations system towards responding to the challenge of coordination that arose in policy formulation, in planning and in implementation of operational programmes.

(Mr. Lichem, Austria)

Recent developments on the economic and social agenda - in particular, the need to move towards environmentally sustainable development - have made cross-sectoral coordination an ever-more-urgent requirement.

The Economic and Social Council's potential contribution to meeting some of these institutional challenges should be carefully explored. We may find that within the entire United Nations system the Economic and Social Council offers a unique opportunity for cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary analysis and debate. This will be facilitated by the broad range of the Council's mandate, covering not only basic issues of economic policies but also questions of environmental and natural-resource development and conservation; energy policies; science and technology; the issues of social development, in particular poverty and population; and the broad range of institutional issues, including participatory development and human rights.

In order to develop the potential of the Economic and Social Council as the central forum for cross-sectoral analysis and policy formulation for sustainable development within the United Nations system, reporting to that Council will probably have to be structured accordingly. The many sectoral reports produced currently by the various functional secretariats and intergovernmental and expert bodies will have to be integrated into some sort of cross-cutting state-of-the-world report, currently available - as we know - only from a private research institution in Washington, D.C., and so far not subject to intergovernmental discussion within the United Nations.

After these very general remarks on the possible long-term perspectives of our endeavours, let me now turn to some of the more concrete tasks at hand. In the long-standing and often frustrating process of restructuring and revitalizing the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields,

(Mr. Lichem, Austria)

General Assembly resolution 45/264, adopted last May, was a positive first step in the right direction. Its timetable will guide our efforts in rendering the United Nations a more effective instrument for addressing the global socio-economic challenges until the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Given the climate of cooperation and the genuine good will demonstrated by all partners in the spring negotiations, my delegation is confident that we shall be able to take another concrete step forward during this General Assembly session by reforming the subsidiary machinery of the Economic and Social Council. My delegation pledges its active participation in the forthcoming deliberations.

At this time I should like to limit myself to some general observations. Our goal should be to make the United Nations more effective in the economic, social and related fields. While economy is important, cutting costs or eliminating bodies is not a goal in itself. We have to make a careful inventory of the expectations Member States bring to the United Nations in the socio-economic field. Once we have identified the needs the United Nations is expected to address, we should prioritize them and ask ourselves how the clearly perceived needs and priorities could best be dealt with.

In the past, newly perceived needs have often led to the establishment of a new committee. Not always was the new body endowed with a clear mandate or given the tools, especially the funding, actually to meet the needs it was founded to address. The Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development is a case in point. The Committee was established following the recommendation of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development. The fund equally recommended by the Conference, which was to be one of the Committee's main tools in achieving its objective, never

(Mr. Lichem, Austria)

materialized. Without any doubt it is still crucially important to make science and technology optimally available for development. Since the Committee, in the eyes of many, has not been able to fulfil this function, it may be necessary to look to alternative ways. The same holds true for a number of committees which are frequently named as prime candidates for reform: the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy, the Committee on Natural Resources, the High-Level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, and the World Food Council.

We should consider biennialization, expertization, mergers, consideration of issues in the course of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, special sessions of the General Assembly and other appropriate means to address shortcomings in the present subsidiary structure.

In the forthcoming negotiations we need to be innovative and courageous enough to embark on new terrain. Our willingness to be flexible and to sacrifice narrow positions in a spirit of compromise for the wider common good will be rewarded when the United Nations has become more effective and more relevant and thus more able to translate into reality the vision of the Charter in the economic field.

Mr. SEZAKI (Japan): After the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council ended its meetings in 1988 without achieving its objectives and until the resumed forty-fifth session of the General Assembly was convened early this year, the process of reforming the United Nations in the economic and social fields remained at a virtual standstill. But the resumed session was truly a milestone. The General Assembly accomplished a number of things: first, it affirmed the basic guiding principles of the reform process;

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

secondly, it laid down a schedule for reform; and, thirdly, it reached a decision to reform the work of the Economic and Social Council. The General Assembly decided to consolidate the Council's regular sessions and established a high-level segment to improve the Council's policy formulation function as well as a coordination segment to enable the Council to address more effectively the issue of coordination within the United Nations system.

Having consistently stressed the need for reform in these fields, Japan is especially pleased at the outcome of the resumed session. I wish to assure the Assembly that my delegation intends to contribute actively to the work of the revitalized Economic and Social Council so that this principal organ of United Nations activity in the economic and social fields will live up to the high expectations of Member States.

Resolution 45/264 entrusts the General Assembly with the task of reviewing the function of subsidiary organs in the economic and social fields at this session. The Charter provided for the establishment of such organs in these fields as would assist the work of the principal organs of the United Nations, namely, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. These principal organs in due course created subsidiary organs, hoping the United Nations would respond effectively to the new challenges confronting the international community.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

Many subsidiary organs have functioned reasonably well, but over the years some subsidiary organs have proved to be inefficient and ineffective as clearly reflected by a decline in member-country participation and interest. They are not carrying out their functions as successfully as expected; they have not been responsive to the actual needs of the developing countries. There are many possible reasons: in many instances the circumstances that were the basis for their establishment have changed and as a result so has the priority of their work. More importantly, the relevance of a specific body may be at stake; we should ascertain whether it has accomplished what it was supposed to accomplish. It now appears that some organs were created without sufficiently considering the fundamental question of what services in specific areas - that is, science and technology or natural resources - it is possible for the United Nations to deliver to Member States. In other words the role of the United Nations in specific areas should be closely examined before structural reforms are undertaken.

The proliferation of subsidiary bodies and the subsequent duplication or overlapping of their activities are also matters we must carefully examine. On the basis of these comprehensive and intense reviews on a case-by-case basis we shall have to determine possible options. These options include, first, transforming certain organs into expert bodies, intergovernmental or otherwise, so that they may focus on more technical and substantive inputs; secondly, the biennialization of meetings where the nature of the work being done makes this appropriate; thirdly, merger and consolidation when the work of a body duplicates or overlaps that of another; and, fourthly, the discontinuation of a body whose role is deemed to be no longer relevant.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

Japan will remain open-minded as to the options that might be taken. What is now clear to us, however, is that we must undertake a thorough review of these subsidiary bodies as a matter of the utmost priority with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations in the economic and social fields.

My delegation feels that considerable groundwork has already been laid for this effort, particularly at the meeting of the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council. I am referring specifically to the identification of problematic bodies such as the Committee on Natural Resources, the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development and the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy. While the review of subsidiary bodies involves broad and complex issues, and account must be taken of the outcome of various meetings of conferences such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), it is crucial that at this session we fulfil the tasks entrusted to us under the decision reached at the resumed session and achieve tangible results. This will demonstrate the strong commitment we all have to achieving reform in this sector.

I believe that it would also be useful at this session to review the reporting system of the subsidiary bodies and find ways and means to reduce the excessive workload of the Economic and Social Council.

My delegation welcomes the various informal consultations that have been taking place on this matter. A good start has been made and it is important to keep up the momentum for reform so that the United Nations will be more responsive to the changing needs and challenges of the international community

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

and especially of developing countries. I hope that serious negotiations will commence as soon as possible in the same spirit of cooperation that prevailed at the resumed session and I should like to reaffirm my delegation's commitment to contributing actively to that work.

Mr. WORONIECKI (Poland): The restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, as reconfirmed in resolution 45/264, needs to be addressed through a concerted, deliberate and continuing process with a view to enhancing the flexibility and adaptability of the Organization in the performance of its functions as well as effectiveness and efficiency in fulfilling its goals.

The United Nations is an organic unity embracing a universal body of Members engaged in solving a comprehensive set of problems of a complex and interrelated character. The environment in which the United Nations operates is not indifferent to the Organization's activities and performance. The relevance and vitality of the United Nations therefore depend on its capacity to reflect the spirit of the times, the evolving nature of international relations and the needs and expectations of the Member States. We support in this context the idea of developing the economic and social sectors around the concept of a unitary United Nations. The United Nations of tomorrow cannot just ponder over problems. It has to become action-oriented, be it in peace-keeping, human rights or the protection of the environment.

The watershed in international relations which we have crossed during the past two years is, I believe, already part of the history of our Organization. What is still at stake, however, is the redefinition and redeployment of a structure within the United Nations which might better serve and service the emerging community of nations and their interests, especially in view of the scarcity of available resources.

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

Reactivating growth and development, reshaping the world order, achieving greater complementarity between the economic and social sectors, expanding opportunities for human development and human rights are among the primary and practical concerns and responsibilities of the United Nations family of nations.

Resolution 45/264 represents an important contribution to the efforts of the United Nations in streamlining the activities of the Economic and Social Council. It provides us also with important guidance for further work in restructuring the relevant sectors of the Organization. I should like to address now some of the issues highlighted in the resolution.

First, complementarity between the work of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly: the complementarity of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly implies the necessity to establish a clearer division of labour between the two, especially the elimination of repetitiveness and overlap in the work of the Council and the Second and Third Committees. A clear-cut division of responsibilities should take into account their competitive advantages and, at the same time, the need to assign a fairer share of work to the subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council, some of which might be transformed from intergovernmental into expert bodies.

Reform in this area should lead to a greater degree of transparency with a view to assuring accountability and the responsiveness of the United Nations to the requests and expectations of the international community. Perhaps the Economic and Social Council should acquire a more operational character especially in coordinating activities within its purview, while the General Assembly would have a more conceptual nature and long-term outlook.

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

Secondly, when the division of labour is being decided upon, due attention must be given to the question of the composition of the Economic and Social Council. Consideration might be given to two options. The first is the possibility of establishing an open-ended Council. That would enable the issue of equitable geographic representation to be side-stepped. It is most likely that such a solution would result in acceleration of the process of further change and in the Council's being given greater responsibility in the fields of reviewing all intersectoral issues and of coordinating the work of the subsidiary organs. It would also affect - perhaps to an even greater degree - the agendas of the Second Committee and the Third Committee, which, in all probability, would be compelled to consider refocusing their work on strategic-policy guidance and on the discussion of selected topics, possibly at a high, or higher, level. Finally, one can even imagine the merging of both Committees or, at least, of parts of their agendas. This would reflect changes that have already been introduced within the Economic and Social Council.

It may be said that two areas - human rights and the environment - deserve more prominence in the General Assembly's institutional set-up. As the Polish Foreign Minister said during the general debate, the role of the United Nations in helping the victims of natural or man-made disasters should be strengthened. This role should be reflected in the Organization's institutional structure.

The alternative to the creation of an open-ended Economic and Social Council is the retention of a Council with restricted membership. It is very likely that that would result in a somewhat more lengthy process of change, which, it is to be hoped, would make possible more strict management and

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

control of that process. Since, except in the case of voting, the rights of observers are similar to those of members, it may be that this alternative is preferable, at least for the time being.

Thirdly, with regard to the economic, social and related fields, changes in the subsidiary machinery of the Economic and Social Council should reflect the need to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of United Nations programme output. The merging or expertization of relevant subsidiary Council bodies offers such a possibility. If the expertise of the non-governmental organizations and of the scientific and business communities were put to use, and if the rules for the participation of those organizations and communities in United Nations activities were widened, the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council might be given new vigour and vitality. In this context, my delegation recognizes the merit of proposals concerning the reconstitution of specific subsidiary bodies - proposals that were put forward at the resumed forty-fifth session of the General Assembly and have been developed with clarity today by several preceding speakers.

Changes in the subsidiary machinery could be applied also to the operational system of the United Nations. The roles of various United Nations organs and organizations, as well as their relationships with each other, in the provision of technical assistance need to be redefined, and the structures and functions of those bodies need to be clarified. The idea of the creation of an international development council, reporting to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council, deserves serious consideration, as does the idea that bodies responsible for environmental protection should be upgraded, whether within or outside the structure of the Council or of the General Assembly. The future of specific subsidiary bodies could be discussed

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

further, within the framework of informal consultations at the current session, with a view to having recommendations prepared for submission to the General Assembly at its next session.

Fourthly, while the management of the Secretariat is the responsibility of the Secretary-General, it is essential that changes in the Secretariat be harmonized with changes in the intergovernmental sector. Secretariat changes should strengthen the United Nations as a centre for the collection and dissemination of information, including information about emerging trends, emergencies, relief needs and ad hoc operations. Forecasting, planning, monitoring and evaluating trends in development should be accorded greater emphasis, with a view to giving economic and social perspectives to world and regional development.

Changes in the Secretariat should result in stricter definition of managerial and operational responsibilities. Structures need to be streamlined, and functions clarified, so that better coordination and leadership in the economic and social fields may be made possible. This applies also to United Nations work in the field. In particular, the role of the regional bureaus and the resident coordinators needs to be strengthened, as does that of the network of United Nations information centres.

The quality of Secretariat reporting calls for improvement. To this end, the levels of expertise of Secretariat staff and of consultants should be raised so that the interests of various regions and countries and the changes taking place there might be more clearly reflected. At the same time, greater care should be taken to avoid burdening the Secretariat with excessive reporting obligations.

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

Finally, proposals for reform of the Secretariat, while focusing on adapting the structure to current and future needs, should aim at streamlining it by shortening the chain of command, reducing the degree of overlapping, and realigning it to make it less top-heavy.

If the United Nations is to be made more efficient and effective, member States will have to find common ground and arrive at a common understanding of the future world and of the interests of nations in that world. The United Nations will perform better if it manages to foster such understanding and to create the conditions that are necessary for fruitful cooperation. As to the potential of the United Nations, hopes and expectations are now high.

The process of transforming international economic relations - a process in which we are all, willy nilly, engaged - presents us with such an opportunity. In this process, we are learning a lesson in bold determination - determination to see that our aspirations are fulfilled. I am confident that in the economic and social sectors of the United Nations this lesson can be put to good use.

Mr. WILENSKI (Australia): The United Nations is today faced with both new opportunities and new challenges. For the past year the United Nations has been at the centre of international events in a way unparalleled in the previous 40 years. It now faces a huge range of demands from a world that suddenly regards it as having the capacity to attain at least some of the goals that its founding members originally set for it. However, while progress is being made on many fronts, the alleviation of poverty and the promotion of economic development - which rank among the most important goals of the United Nations system - demand far more effective attention.

(Mr. Wilenski, Australia)

Thus, while the political side of the United Nations has undergone a great revival, the economic and social side - in particular, the economic sector - remains, by comparison, relatively ineffective in changing national government policy and influencing the course of economic events. Here I refer not to the major agencies, such as the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organization, which continue to do invaluable work in their respective fields, but to the major policy organs of the United Nations, such as the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The great range of economic and social problems facing us today has created an urgency, which we all feel, in the need to examine and to reform the operations of these organs.

(Mr. Wilenski, Australia)

Of course, we recognize that reform will make no difference unless there is a political will to make effective use of the relevant organs of the United Nations and to conduct discussions in those organs on the relevant issues and at an appropriate level. There is little purpose in improving the structures unless we are prepared to use them. Without political will, results will not be achieved, whatever the structure; but without the appropriate structure, political will can be rendered ineffective. As a further step there is little to be achieved in improving the structures of the Organization unless we can also improve the working methods within those structures.

While there is no doubt that reform is a long-term and in many ways a perpetual process, my delegation believes that the resumed meetings of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly resulted in a practical and wide-ranging package of reforms which, if properly implemented, should make an important contribution to the process of revitalizing the economic and social sectors. One key aspect of the outcome of the resumed meetings was an agreement to review at this session the subsidiary bodies of the United Nations in the economic and social fields.

In many ways the reform of those subsidiary bodies goes to the very heart of the role of the United Nations in the economic-development sphere. Many of those bodies are responsible for the provision of technical advice to developing countries and for assistance with the implementation of their development programmes at the post practical levels. That type of assistance is fundamental to the development process, and it is an area in which the United Nations should play an indisputable and invaluable role. However, it is also unfortunately true that the United Nations has not always succeeded in responding to the legitimate needs of developing countries in providing technical advice and assistance to the extent and of the quality required.

(Mr. Wilenski, Australia)

Over the past few months many delegations have devoted considerable efforts to identifying those subsidiary bodies that they believe to be most in need of reform and revitalization. Some of the delegations that have spoken before me today have identified areas to which they believe we need to devote our attention at this session of the General Assembly, areas such as natural resources, energy, science and technology and technical cooperation. My delegation believes that some important suggestions have been made that deserve our full attention, and we look forward to working constructively with other delegations from both developed and developing countries to reach a satisfactory outcome on this issue. If we can achieve this, those subsidiary bodies have the potential to make a practical and important contribution to the development process. In deciding how those bodies should best operate our criterion should be the maximizing of their effectiveness in achieving results which make a difference to people's lives.

We have before us a formidable task for the next few years. A reform of the subsidiary bodies in the economic and social sectors would be but one small step in the very long and complex process of reforming and revitalizing the United Nations. The economic and social sectors must be made to respond more effectively to the wishes and needs of Member States in promoting development and must be made to utilize more efficiently the scarce financial and human resources available within the United Nations system. The outcome of the resumed meetings of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly represented a significant step forward, but we have a long way to go and much work to do to ensure that the seed planted by resolution 45/264 will bear the fruit we all desire.

Mr. SILALAHI (Indonesia): At the outset let me express the sincere appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his comprehensive and informative report on this important issue. We would also like to thank the representative of Ghana, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Group of 77, for his statement, which reflects the basic views of my delegation. I shall therefore confine my remarks to the issues my delegation considers of particular importance.

We meet today in an atmosphere already charged with the impact of traumatic change and profound transitions, yielding unprecedented challenges and opportunities. As we deliberate on this agenda item the unfolding drama continues. A historic meeting is under way in Madrid designed to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and only last week a historic cease-fire agreement was signed at Paris marking a significant step towards bringing the conflict in South-East Asia to an end. Indeed, events are unfolding rapidly, eschewing the old paradigm of conflict, confrontation and competition and offering hope and the prospect of building a new world order. My delegation believes that the quest for international peace and stability cannot be sustained without equal importance being given to promoting international cooperation in the economic and social fields.

To effectively meet and respond to these rapid and emerging circumstances and fundamentally changed State relationships it is timely that the United Nations, as the primary multilateral Organization capable of addressing and shaping global events, also needs to change and to become a more effective central framework for any viable and acceptable new world order. My delegation supports the revitalization of the United Nations as a guiding element in strengthening the multilateral system. However, as was stated earlier by the Indonesian Foreign Minister in his address to the General

(Mr. Silalahi, Indonesia)

Assembly, the United Nations can only be as effective as its Members will allow it to be and can only succeed if its Members are committed to make it succeed. If Member States continue to use this forum to pursue narrowly conceived interests rather than to utilize it as a collective instrument for solving global problems and achieving shared goals, and if the nations of the world continue to be torn by conflict and rivalry and afflicted by mutual mistrust, intolerance and prejudice, then the international bodies they set up can hardly be expected to rise above those shortcomings. Viewed from that perspective, perhaps the more relevant observation to be made about the achievements of the United Nations so far is not that it has failed to realize so many of its stated objectives, but that, despite inherent limitations, it has accomplished so much.

Similarly, the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields is a timely and essential exercise. Not only have the relevance and efficacy of the Economic and Social Council come increasingly into question over the years, but it has also been subjected to eclipse and marginalization, particularly throughout the years of the cold war. In our view, the authority and role of the Economic and Social Council should continue to be strengthened so that it may be enabled to perform the functions originally envisaged for it in the Charter. That would enable it to provide overall direction and guidance to Member States and the relevant bodies and agencies within the United Nations system, within the framework of its task of policy formulation and coordination in the economic and social fields.

It is therefore greatly encouraging to see the Economic and Social Council entering on a new lease on life and growing relevance. As it is a principal organ of the United Nations, it is important that its role and

(Mr. Silalahi, Indonesia)

function in the economic and social activities of the United Nations be reasserted. This year's second regular session of the Council saw the introduction of significant structural changes and innovations and made what may prove to be a lasting imprint on its work and effectiveness.

(Mr. Silalahi, Indonesia)

The first steps were taken in response to the long-overdue need to enhance the functioning of the Economic and Social Council so as to enable it to effectively redress the continuing crisis in development, the increasing impoverishment of the developing countries, and the widening gap between them and the developed countries. Consensus resolution 45/264 achieved this year at the resumed meetings of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly - a resolution which includes the basic principles and guidelines for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields - is also an encouraging step in the right direction.

Obviously, therefore, a revitalized Economic and Social Council would have a crucial role to play in carrying forward such major international economic undertakings as the reactivation of the North-South dialogue. In this connection, we believe that the Council should play its proper role in the full and effective implementation of the commitments and policies for international development cooperation.

It is within this context that we should approach our review of the subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in the economic and social fields. In doing so, however, my delegation would like to caution that any such review of procedures, structures and functions should be carried out for the purpose of achieving a more effective and efficient functioning of the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations system. It is clear that if the Council needs to be strengthened in order to be able to operate as originally intended by the Charter, then these subsidiary bodies also need to be enhanced in an attempt to optimize them as instruments for achieving the objectives which the Council has set itself.

(Mr. Silalahi, Indonesia)

Our delegation believes that the restructuring and revitalization of the subsidiary machinery in the economic, social and related fields is a process which must be undertaken in phases and should encompass all related bodies. In this regard, my delegation reaffirms the need to establish criteria for carrying out a restructuring of the subsidiary machinery. My delegation concurs with the view that this exercise should be carried out with the objective of improving the functions of the United Nations bodies and their capacity to deliver results, taking into account the needs, concerns and interests of the developing countries. We need also to strengthen the regional economic commissions of the United Nations system. Regional approaches are increasingly important in dealing with differentiated social and economic problems, and as a basis for concerting action among Member States. Particular attention also needs to be paid to those bodies that have not effectively performed the tasks for which they were established. Furthermore, in order to avoid the problems of overlapping and duplication of activities, programme objectives need to be compared.

As to the methodology of the review, it is my delegation's opinion that, as we now have approximately 150 bodies operating in the intergovernmental machinery, it is necessary to focus on those bodies that are not performing their tasks effectively. My delegation can concur with the suggested list of bodies that have already been identified for review: the Intergovernmental Committee for Science and Technology for Development and its advisory body, the Advisory Committee on Science and Technology for Development; the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy; the Committee on Natural Resources; and the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. However, we

(Mr. Silalahi, Indonesia)

hope that this list represents only the first stage and is not exhaustive or final. Furthermore, it is also necessary to analyse the reporting criteria with the objective of their simplification.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to stress once again the important role of the United Nations in international economic cooperation, especially in promoting development and in responding effectively to the needs of the developing countries. We also resolve to strive to make the United Nations a more democratic, effective and efficient organization so that it may be able to meet new and emerging challenges. In all its intergovernmental structures, the United Nations must promote a more equitable and balanced representation of its Members so as to reflect the increased membership and the ideal that its decision-making process should be more democratic and transparent. We are at the same time very much aware that, while the restructuring and revitalization process is essential, for the Organization to be effective the political will of all its Member States is imperative.

Mr. MOORE (United States of America): The Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations states a determination:

> "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and ... to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples".

We have not yet achieved the promise or fulfilled the obligation of those words. We have not marshalled enough priority, will or resources. We have not got our act together. Hence, the profound need to restructure and revitalize the United Nations economic and social activities.

(Mr. Moore, United States)

At the resumed meetings of the General Assembly last spring, the United States supported efforts to produce a consensus resolution entitled "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields", which called for changes to be implemented next year. Of these, we consider to be especially important a clarification and tightening of links between the various elements of the United Nations system, including the Secretariat and intergovernmental bodies. Reform should take place in the context of improved coordination in the United Nations system, both between the Secretariat and agencies, and between the Secretariat-agency system and the relevant intergovernmental organs. Guidance should flow in a cycle from the intergovernmental bodies to the agencies. In turn, the Secretariat-agencies should provide information and suggestions back to the intergovernmental bodies, such as the Economic and Social Council, so that they can follow up.

Last summer in Geneva, my delegation was pleased to participate in the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council for 1991, the theme of which at that time was the strengthening of multilateral cooperation in international economic affairs. It was gratifying to note how the process of restructuring and revitalizing the Council was already beginning to bear some fruit. The very useful summary given by the President of the Council in the general debate demonstrated that the Council succeeded in several ways in engaging itself:

(Mr. Moore, United States)

"within the process of revitalization, contributing to better mutual understanding between countries and groups of countries and thus laying firmer foundations for collective action capable of securing the approval and, what is more, the participation and active support of all the countries and agencies concerned".

The Council undertook the first formal thematic analysis of a major policy theme, discussing the question of resource flows to the developing world, given the emergence of former Eastern bloc States into the world economy. And the Council's discussion on various economic consequences of the Gulf crisis further testified to its potential as a forum for analysing a gripping current event without the pressure of having to produce a consensus resolution for the record.

These various changes are designed to begin the transformation of the Economic and Social Council into a more useful member of the United Nations family by providing it with a more clearly differentiated role, one that is more substantive and more educational in nature. We see the Council as a true agora for discussion, an intergovernmental body for the review and coordination of United Nations agencies, both a de facto preparatory committee for the General Assembly in its areas and the General Assembly's effective arm in the economic and social realms. We look forward to working together with colleagues on the better definition and implementation of these functions.

(Mr. Moore, United States)

Now, immediately, we look forward to another element of reform: the General Assembly's review of the operations of the subsidiary bodies within its mandate, to improve the performance of the overall United Nations system. Informal discussions have been under way for months on this subject, and we hope that useful results can soon be produced. We believe the time has come to review the whole body of subsidiary organs, with an eye to determining whether their mandates are still valid, their organization and resources appropriate, and their accomplishments of value. We have formed no preconceived judgement on these questions or on any particular body. We are also committed to the concept that reform should be deliberative and prudent, taken in small steps and continuous.

The report of the Secretary-General on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in economic, social and related fields has just been released. My delegation intends to study it with care and looks forward to using it in the discussions, hopefully fruitful, that are to take place.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): We have heard the last speaker in the general debate on this item.

Ambassador Shihabi has asked me to inform members that he has undertaken consultations with all Member States on the manner in which negotiations on a draft resolution on this item are to be carried out, and that he will in due course inform the Assembly of the outcome of these consultations.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): At the request of Ambassador Shihabi, I should also like to inform Members of the following changes in the Assembly's programme of work:

(The President)

First, at the request of the sponsors, consideration of agenda item 30, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity", which was originally scheduled for this morning, is postponed to Friday, 8 November, in the morning.

Secondly, also at the request of the sponsor, agenda item 142, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", is postponed to Wednesday, 13 November, in the afternoon.

Thirdly, under agenda item 13, "Report of the International Court of Justice", on Friday, 8 November, the Assembly will hear statements by the Secretary-General and the President of the Court.

Finally, I wish to draw Members' attention to the fact that the meeting for the announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1992 programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will be held on Tuesday, 12 November, in the afternoon, and not in the morning as previously announced.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.